



Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

P.O. Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990
Fax Number 805.564.5480

Phone Number 805.564.5437
www.santabarbaraCA.gov

AGENDA DATE: September 1, 2010

TO: Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

FROM: Front Country Trails Task Force Staff

SUBJECT: Trail Improvement Project Checklist

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Front Country Trails (FCT) Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force receives a report and provides comments on the Trail Improvement Project Checklist.

DISCUSSION:

Introduction

The purpose of this staff report is to provide the Task Force with information on the draft Trail Improvement Project Checklist (Attachment 1). The checklist was developed to clarify and facilitate trail improvement projects proposed by trails organizations and other interested individuals or community groups. It also provides an opportunity for the agencies and trail project proponents to coordinate and prioritize projects based on need, resources, and intended outcomes. The checklist does not replace or preclude the development of a long-term management plan, it is intended to support trail work while planning efforts are underway.

The checklist is focused on projects that exceed Forest Service Protocols for Level I trail maintenance, and propose significant trail reconstruction, new trails, or re-routes. Level II maintenance projects may also be exempt if approved by the Forest Service. Trail maintenance is categorized by the type of work to be performed and the need for heritage compliance. Levels of maintenance are established in the March 2006 Los Padres National Forest Trail Maintenance Protocol (Attachment 2).

Completion of the checklist is not required for organizations or individuals that undertake Level I maintenance projects under sponsored volunteer agreements authorized by the Los Padres National Forest. Approved annually, volunteer service agreements establish the type, location, and terms of Level 1 maintenance projects, and require record keeping and coordination with the Forest Service (Attachment 3).

Completion of the checklist is also not required for projects outside the FCT system, such as the basic trails maintenance provided by the Montecito Trails Foundation for the lowland trails in Summerland and Montecito.

Trail Improvement Project Checklist

The purpose of the checklist is to ensure that there is consistent and comprehensive planning and review of all significant trail improvement projects. As shown in Attachment 1, the checklist identifies the type of information that is needed for project review and approval. Significant trail reconstruction, new trails, or re-routes can trigger an assessment of cultural and biological resources, require the acquisition of landowner approval and public easements, and increase agency management responsibility, among other considerations.

Completion of the checklist demonstrates the commitment of the trail proponent/organization to carry out a project that is consistent with FCT trail standards as well as intended trail usage. Since all three FCT agencies have limited resources for FCT management, demonstrated commitment from trail proponents facilitates the allocation of resources for projects that are most likely to succeed.

Consistent with the management framework established by the 2009 Challenge Cost Share Agreement, the FCT agencies shall collectively review and approve significant trail improvement projects. To facilitate moving a project forward, a lead agency will be designated to work directly with the project proponent during the review process.

Public Outreach and Review

Increased public involvement in trails management and maintenance is a key management objective for the front country trails. Significant trail projects provide an opportunity to engage and inform trail users and area residents. As a result, the checklist includes the submittal of public outreach methods and materials. Such methods could include project signage, web site information, handouts, media releases, and print advertisements, among others. The checklist also establishes that project review may include presentation of the proposed project to the Task Force.

Next Steps

After Task Force review, the checklist will be finalized and distributed to all trail proponents and organizations. In addition to the checklist, the agencies will develop basic guidelines to assist organizations unfamiliar with Forest Service trail standards and protocols. The checklist will also be available with the FCT Task Force documents on the City's website.

Agenda Item 3
Trail Improvement Project Checklist
September 1, 2010
Page 3

PREPARED BY: Erik Axelson, Deputy Director Santa Barbara County Parks
Kerry Kellogg, Recreation Specialist, Los Padres National Forest
Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director, City of
Santa Barbara

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Trail Improvement Project Checklist, Draft 09-01-10
2. Trails Maintenance Protocol for Heritage Compliance, Los
Padres National Forest, March 2006
3. FY2010 USFS Sponsored Volunteer Agreement with SBMTV